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ABSTRACT

Effective training for teachers in urban schools should begin from and be based upon an analysis of teacher work success. The major steps in the development of a success-based teacher training program (both preservice and inservice) are: (1) locate the educational settings where successful teacher practices are evident; (2) study the teachers instrumental in providing the desired outcomes; (3) analyze and synthesize the data; (4) develop training processes for the skills and knowledge needed; and (5) conduct followup evaluations. Two fundamental assumptions of this "backward planning model" are that the criteria for judging teacher work success can be agreed upon and that applications of the success criteria can yield positive results. Other suggestions for improving preservice teacher education are that teacher education curricula should build on students' prior knowledge and should be tailored to round out teacher candidates' preparation. Increased attention should be given to group instruction for the prospective teachers' sense of efficacy. Inservice teacher education programs should be treated quite separately from preservice, since the challenges and contextual realities are different. Effective inservice training is organized around as many teachers as possible within an individual school and demands considerable commitments of time and dedication. (FG)

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Urban School Improvement

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Lawrence W. Lezotte

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

I would like to begin my presentation by expressing my appreciation to Ms. Grace Watson and Ms. Floretta McKenzie for inviting me to participate in this workshop series. In my opinion, the workshop title, "Strategies for Urban School Improvement" reflects a recognition that the problems of urban education are at the core of the current crisis in public education. In 1976 Robert Havinghurst said that the "Crisis of Public Education lies in the big cities" and his statement is perhaps even more true today. The title also reflects a belief that urban schools can be improved. The question before us is not "if" but "how." My presentation presumes that you share these views.

I am especially pleased to have been asked to address my remarks to the topic of effective teacher training. This topic has taken on added significance because of the recent (June 16, 1980) Time Magazine feature article titled "Help! Teacher Can't Teach."

In my opinion, the timing and coverage of this magazine article was most unfortunate. If there is one thing the educational enterprise does not need is yet another "opinion maker" article that again convinces those "in" and "outside" the enterprise of education that public education is failing. Let me quickly add that I do not question the authenticity of the materials presented in that article nor do I deny that there is a crisis in public education. My concerns center around the purposes served by such an article. It seems that this article will only serve to increase the sense of futility and hopelessness already associated with the schools and discourage those educators who are, in fact, making a valuable and positive contribution

to the education of our young people. I hope we will have time to discuss this article later in this session.

Interpreting the Task

In order to place my remarks in context let me give you my understanding of the goals of this workshop series and indicate where my remarks fit into that plan. As I understand it the goals of this workshop series are two-fold (1) to provide increased and more effective technical assistance to the educational community, and (2) to strengthen the capacity for intra-departmental collaboration to improve schools. For my part, I will focus on research and related activities in the area of effective teacher training. I hope my presentation will contribute to the overall workshop goals.

My remarks are based on my experiences as an active urban educational researcher, a faculty member at a large teacher training institution (Michigan State University) and as associate director of the Institute for Research on Teaching at Michigan State University. I believe that these professional experiences have helped me to develop a perspective on the issue of effective teacher training and urban school improvement that you may find useful as you meet out your duties and responsibilities whatever they may be.

Conceptual Approach to Effective Teacher Training

In 1975, the National Society for the Study of Education (NSSE) published a yearbook titled "Teacher Education." This volume contained a number of interesting chapters prepared by leading educational scholars and I would recommend the entire volume to you as an important source of thought on teacher training. One particular chapter has had

special meaning for me as I have thought about the question of effective approaches to teacher training. The particular chapter by Richard Turner titled "An Overview of Research in Teacher Education" sets forth a simple and straight forward conceptual framework for thinking about the question of effective teacher training. Turner states that the singular goal of teacher training is to optimize that portion of the teacher's work success that can be directly attributed to teacher preparation. In order to achieve this goal two elements are needed. First, teacher preparation programs must reflect a schema for identifying and organizing dependable information about teacher training and second, we need a careful analysis of "teacher work success."

Most teacher training programs have been developed around curricular contents and processes that some well-meaning individual or group throught ought to be a part of the training processes. This tradition has emphasized the Turner's notion of the schematic component of training. Such programs have tended to have abstract and theoretical validity but they have tended to ignore the component that analyzes "teacher work success."

Success Based Teacher Training Program

My major thesis in this paper is that effective teacher training programs (both preservice and inservice) should begin from and be based upon an analysis of teacher work success. I am suggesting that effective teacher training programs should utilize what some have called a backward planning process. The major steps in the development of a success based teacher training program are (1) locate those

educational settings where the intended educational outcomes are evident (2) carefully study the teachers that have been instrumental in producing those intended student outcomes, (3) analyze and synthesize those data, (4) develop training processes that will develop those skills and that knowledge in the new teacher or the teachers being retrained, and (5) conduct follow-up evaluations to be sure that the training processes are having their intended impact on those trained.

If such a planning process were used we could do a much better job of preparing individuals for teaching roles in specific educational settings. In the past most training programs have been differentiated to emphasize educational levels (e.g., elementary versus secondary) and subject matter areas (e.g., secondary science). This model could be applied to add a contextual dimension (e.g., urban versus suburban). For example, suppose that our goal was to develop a new teacher training program for individuals aspiring to be teachers in our urban schools. It would seem that the logical place to begin the program planning process would be to systematically identify some number of urban teachers who are currently experiencing high levels of success in the workplace--namely, effective urban teachers. Once these teachers had been identified, then we would carefully study their practices for the purpose of identifying and describing those practices and procedures that they have in common that are related to their effectiveness. It would be necessary to use comparison groups of either ineffective or at least less effective teachers. The reason we would study these teachers would be to increase our understanding of which practices are common to all teachers and which practices are unique to those teachers who are experiencing high levels of success in the work place.

Once we had these detailed descriptions we could then begin to design appropriate training experiences for our pre-service or inservice candidates. This step would lead to the development of Turner's "schema" since we would have to decide how we can efficiently organize and develop the training so that our candidates who exist the program with these skills and knowledge firmly in place.

Before I proceed to discuss this model further, I would like to digress for a minute. I have a hunch that our new teacher training program would contain a component of "field-based experience" for our preservice candidates. If you believe that my backward planning approach has merit, let me ask you, "Where would you place our pre-service candidates for their "field experience?" I think you would agree that the best field-based experiences would be in those schools and classrooms where teachers are known to be experiencing work success. This brings me to an observation and a recommendation. The observation is that current teacher training programs that include a field experience--and nearly all do--make little or no attempt to assess the effectiveness of the supervising teacher prior to the placement of the student teacher. My recommendation is that all training programs carefully scrutinize the teacher before making student teacher assignments. It makes absolutely no sense to place student teachers with supervising teachers that do not exemplify the "best" in teacher practices. When teachers were in short supply we did not have the luxury of placing high standards on supervising teachers. However, because the teacher supply situation has changed, it seems reasonable to me that we develop and maintain a "higher standard" for field placements.

Furthermore, research has shown that the student teaching experience--good or bad--is the most powerful training component. Student teachers model their supervising teachers and it seems only fitting and proper that they be placed in the presence of the best possible models of good teaching practice.

Criteria for Judging "Teacher Work Success"

The backward planning model rests on two very important and perhaps problematic assumptions. The first assumption is that we can agree on a set of criteria for judging "teacher work success." The second assumption is that given an agreed-upon set of criteria, we can find teachers who meet the criteria when they are applied. In my opinion both assumptions are reasonable and each can be met. Let me attempt to explain why I believe this is so.

1. Criteria:

One of the pervasive and historical problems of American education has been our reluctance to state clearly and explicitly what the goals of schooling are. Somehow, we have come to a notion that in a democracy it is only right and proper that the ends of education be locally defined. While I don't wish to minimize the importance of meeting locally defined educational "needs" and "wants," I do wish to argue that their are some common and nearly universally accepted goals for public education. For example, I do not know of any school system in the country that does not state that it wants it's students to be able to read, write and count to a reasonable degree of proficiency. The question is not whether we can agree on some minimum set of essential goals, the question is whether we can agree on how goal attainments

ought to be assessed. Here we face head-on the whole testing controversy. While the testing issue is important and deserves serious analysis and debate we can't wait for it to be "resolved" before we attend to the matter of criteria for judging teacher work success. As a hard core "pragmatist" I would argue that our set of criteria for judging work success be anchored in the current devices for assessing educational outcomes. If tests are now being used we should define our teacher success in those terms. If the assessment devices or procedures change, we will obviously have to redefine teacher work successes to fit the new context. The point is that good-or-bad, whether we like it or not, teacher effectiveness and school effectiveness are already being judged in terms of the devices being used and we might better accept that reality and proceed. For example, do you know of any community where parents, the board of education claim that they are satisfied with their educational programs if the assessed student performance is low. To do so would be analogous to being satisfied with the "operation" even though all the patients "died."

One of the common criticisms often voiced by those who do not believe that teacher work success ought to be anchored in assessed student performance is that test performances reflect experiences and opportunities the students bring to the classroom and are beyond the control of the teacher. While I agree that test performance does reflect factors beyond the control of the teacher I am not persuaded that this renders them invalid for our purposes. If this were so how do you explain that year after year the students of some teachers consistently do well on these assessment devices while other teachers

teaching similar students often in the same school consistently do less well on these assessment devices? Until someone can convince me to the contrary, I have to believe that these differences in student performance reflect different patterns and practices of the teachers.

In summary, the criteria for judging teacher work success should be anchored, as a minimum, in student performance as it is being assessed. We are closer to a consensus as to the essential goals of schooling than many are willing to recognize. A teacher training program anchored in teacher work success would be highly desirable and publicly attractive. Finally, such a set of criteria would make explicit what is already implicit, the basis for judging school and teacher effectiveness.

2. Positive Examples of Teacher Success

The second assumption of the success based training program is that the application of the success criteria will yield positive examples of teacher work success. As previously indicated, I believe this assumption can be met. The research on instructionally effective schools and effective teaching provides convincing evidence that, educational critics not-with-standing, there are schools and teachers that are experiencing substantial success in meeting the goals of public education. At this point, I am tempted to review some of the major findings of research on instructionally effective schools. However, I will resist this temptation because I am sure Ron Edmonds reviewed this research literature during his earlier presentation before this group. I have been privileged to be a part of some of the instructionally effective schools research and I have tried to stay-up with the

research in this area and I am convinced that this research represents a validation of the assumption being considered.

Because Mr. Edmonds has been and is now involved in the effective schools research he may not have mentioned the effective teaching research which also has bearing on this discussion as well. In the case of the effective schools research, the strategic unit of interest is the school per se. In the teacher effectiveness research, the unit of interest is the individual teacher opening in the context of a single classroom.

The literature on effective teaching is substantial and an exhaustive review would clearly exceed the time and purposes of this presentation. Some of the significant studies of teacher effectiveness would include as a minimum the "California Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study;" Barak Rosenshine's work, "Teaching Behavior and Student Achievement;" Donald Medley's work "Teacher Competence and Teacher Effectiveness;" Kean et al., "What Works in Reading." These studies are by no means exhaustive of the important work in teacher effectiveness. They are illustrative of the fact that we do know something about effective teaching and there are teachers who are effective. As a matter of fact, a carefully written synthesis of the effective teacher literature would go a long way toward defining a schema for organizing and classifying dependable information about teacher behavior. This research, along with the effective schools research, could help us as we begin our search for instances of teacher work success. In addition, it would then serve as a framework for organizing our "success based" training program.

In summary, the likelihood that we could identify instances of teacher experiencing high levels of work success seems a certainty.

It has been done and is currently being done in the continuing research efforts aimed at identifying and describing effective schools and effective teaching practices. The knowledge base, though far from complete, is well established. Hopefully, the Federal government and private foundations will continue to make major investments in these areas of research. The continued support will further inform us as we plan exemplary training programs for teachers.

Related Teacher Training Issues

In the time remaining, I would like to comment as a number of issues that I believe ought to be considered in our efforts to improve urban schooling. The basis for selecting these issues is the instructionally effective schools research. Quite independent of the success-based training model, this issue deserves your attention. At this point I would like to introduce a bias that I have. In my opinion I believe we should give separate consideration to preservice and inservice training strategies. It seems obvious to me that the challenges and contextual realities associated with initial training are fundamentally different from those associated with inservice training. Therefore, I will comment on each in a separate section. First, I will address some of my concerns about preservice training.

Preservice Training Issues

Most preservice teacher training programs seem to presume that the candidates came to teacher training without any concept of teaching or the teacher role. This assumption fails to recognize that the candidate has spent twelve or more years observing teaching and teachers. Undergraduate teacher education candidates have had an extensive array

of non-formal teacher training experiences. Why is this a problem for teacher training? First, teacher educators often complain that the typical undergraduate college program does not allow sufficient time for a comprehensive training program. It is true that formal education courses represent only about one sixth of the undergraduate curriculum. If you accept the validity of this complaint--which seems reasonable--then you would want the training program to be as efficient as possible in order to make maximum use of the time available. If the undergraduate training program were to recognize the cumulative impact of the prior non-formal training, it could probably eliminate some curricular content and add new content in the areas of demonstrated need. A fairly extensive pre-training assessment might go a long way toward individualizing the training to (1) build upon the students prior knowledge, and (2) tailor the training to round out the candidates' preparation efficiently and effectively.

The pre-training assessment process should emphasize actual teaching situations and not paper-pencil tests exclusively. If the pre-training assessment processes were good simulations of actual teaching situations, it would have the added benefit of helping prospective teachers clarify their career goals. Specifically, they might convince some that teaching is not what they really want, for others it would serve to insure them that they have made the correct career choice. In the success-based training model, the students could accurately assess whether their notions of teaching in, for example, urban schools, are accurate. Hopefully, such pre-training assessments would not discourage good candidates but would begin the

process of helping them to develop more accurate and reality based conceptions of the career and role.

A second preservice issue that concerns me has to do with the content of most teacher training curriculum. This concern is directly tied to the instructionally effective schools research. Based on that research, I have concluded that most teacher training programs have drawn too much of their curricular content from the discipline of psychology and have not drawn enough of their content from other relevant disciplines, especially sociology. Let me try to illustrate why this disciplinary imbalance is a problem in teacher training. Psychology provides a useful knowledge base for teachers in that it provides valuable insights into the learning process and related matters. However, psychology as a discipline, is oriented toward the study of the individual. Teachers leave such training programs with a belief in the value of the individual and the recognition that instruction needs to be sensitive to individual needs and individual differences. I have no quarrel with the orientation and knowledge base because it is indeed true that teachers are expected to provide instruction to individuals. The problem comes when teachers realize that even though they are teaching individuals they are doing so in a group setting. Unfortunately, by its nature and orientation to the study of individuals, psychology does not provide much help to the teacher attempting to teach individuals in the group setting. There is nothing more tragic than watching a beginning teacher try to utilize psychological concepts and principles appropriate for an individual to a group of 28 students or try to organize the group of 28 students so that they can work with one student at a time.

It would seem to me that effective teacher training programs would recognize this reality of the classroom and look for additional curricular content to meet this problem. I would suggest that the sociological literature on group behavior and structures would be most useful and informative. An examination of that literature would suggest that we do know a good deal about group dynamics and how to organize and manage groups, and how to use the power of the collective as an adjunct instructional resource to augment the teachers' efforts to insure high levels of mastery for all individuals.

I would like to give one concrete example to illustrate my point. We were conducting a basic skills improvement project in one urban school system in Michigan and many of the teachers complained that they were unable to motivate many of their students. We suggested, and in some cases actually conducted, demonstrations using the concept of group learning games. I have to tell you the teachers were absolutely amazed at how effective these games were, not only for promoting mastery, but as motivating strategies. This is but one example of how concepts and principles well known to Sociologists could and should be an integral part of the preservice teacher training program.

A third issue that concerns me about current preservice training practices has to do with the concept of teacher efficacy--a teacher's belief that he/she can effect the intended outcomes for students. Recent research has indicated that teachers' sense of efficacy, as assessed prior to instruction has been found to be predictive of observed student learning. In describing this research finding to a group of teachers I said that I was sure that teachers leave the pre-service program believing that they can effectively discharge the

teacher role and if their sense of efficacy is subsequently diminished it is because of their actual classroom experiences. The teachers quickly indicated that this was not correct. They suggested that few teachers leave their preservice program believing they have the capacity to do what is expected of them. I subsequently checked their observation with others and found that indeed, they were correct.

While I believe it is reasonable for beginning teachers to have some anxiety and uncertainty about their teaching abilities, I believe that something very crucial is missing from the training process if nearly all are convinced they cannot do what is expected of them. I have suggested that the efficacy dimension be considered as one diagnostic indicator that should be used to monitor the preparation process. I believe that teacher training programs should have as one goal that graduates feel or believe they are adequately prepared.

If teachers approach the classroom already convinced that they will not be effective they are probably defeated before they start. An effective teacher training program should include enough real teaching experiences so that the prospective teacher can develop the confidence needed to approach the teaching role with some realistic hope that they can succeed. Goodness knows, they will need this self-confidence if they are going to overcome the inevitable frustrations they will surely encounter.

Inservice Training

As I indicated previously I believe that effective inservice training is enough different from preservice training to warrant

separate consideration. Before presenting my suggestions regarding effective inservice training let me present certain assumptions. First, because of declining enrollments and general stability in the teacher work force, inservice training represents a major avenue to urban school improvement. Second, urban school improvement should be thought about as a process of change and the way to effective change may call for different strategies then are appropriate for initial skill development. Third, inservice programs which simply focus on teacher change and ignore the institutional patterns and practices are likely to be of limited success.

In the following section I will attempt to discuss why it is not only useful but necessary to approach preservice training from a different perspective than that of inservice training.

1. School As a Social System. One of the most important factors that must be recognized in inservice programs is that the teacher is a member of a school staff and as such is a member of a functioning school social system. This is important to recognize because members of a social system are surrounded by a set of norms, beliefs, role expectations, etc. Many of these social system characteristics are informal and others are an explicit part of the institutional practices of the school. When we provide inservice for teachers the unstated assumption is that they will behave differently as a result of the knowledge or skills acquired in the training process. The assumption is reasonable if the behavioral changes are not in conflict with the norms of the social system. However, our experience is that more often than not this is not the case. Usually,

the newly acquired skills or knowledge applied in the school and classroom will have a disruptive effect on the system. Inservice programs that ignore this reality will not be successful in the long run because most teachers will find it easier to stay with the established routines and avoid the conflicts. What can be done to increase the effectiveness of inservice training. First, inservice experiences ought to involve all or as many teachers from a single school as possible. This will serve two purposes, (1) it will increase the likelihood that the prevailing beliefs and norms can be adjusted to accommodate the changes because more members of the social system are motivated to do so, and(2) it provides a support group for the teachers who are motivated to implement change.

Second, inservice training programs must recognize the importance of the administrator in the change process. The research clearly demonstrates that one of the characteristics of effective change programs is the involvement and continuing support of the administrator. Similiarly one of the characteristics of effective schools is the high level of instructional leadership evidenced by the building principal.

I would strongly recommend that the strategic unit for teacher inservice ought to be the individual school and include all staff and administrators. In my opinion, such programs are much more likely to bring about the improvement we are seeking.

2. Role of Higher Education in Inservice Training. In recent years, the role of higher education inservice and professional development programs have been debated at all levels. At the 1979 AREA meeting I presented a paper on the role of higher education in the new teaching centers program. I have taken the position that higher education

can and should play a meaningful role in inservice programs. However, they can only do so if they are willing to change their orientation to such programs. Typically faculty members are in a "power relationship" with teachers as students in their classroom. Effective inservice and professional development programs must be built on a collegial or collaborative relationship with teachers. This means that the faculty member must approach the interaction with teachers with a different frame of reference. They will not be effective if they confront teachers with the impression that they are the experts and their advice should be followed without question. For many of my higher education colleagues this arrangement will be difficult if not impossible for them to accept. I want to quickly add that this new arrangement will be welcomed by many in higher education because they have long since recognized that the collaborative model for inservice training is effective. What we need now is to bring about the necessary changes in the social system of higher education so that the institutional patterns and practices will recognize and regard faculty who are effective in the collaborative arrangement. I can assure you that this has not been the case in the past. Many of you know from the programs you have funded, that these roles are not readily accepted in the hallowed halls of academia. I remain optimistic because I believe the change process is underway, after all survial is a powerful motivator even for the most reluctant and resistant among us.

3. Context for Effective Inservice Training. Inservice training designed to bring about urban school improvement requires a reasonable arrangement and level of institutional and individual commitment. I have suggested that school improvement is a process of change and change

occurs slowly in complex institutions. Effective inservice must recognize that change is process, not an event. As a process it requires planning, deliberation, implementation, evaluation, more planning and so on. This process requires time. It can't occur during lunch hour, before school or one day a semester. If we are serious about improvement we must make a commitment to regular and frequent meetings designed for that purpose. Current institutional arrangments, teacher contracts and the like make this a challange. I wish that it could be otherwise but I don't believe it can.

I want to stress the need for evaluation as an important part of inservice training. Too often we don't follow-up on our efforts and systematically assess whether we are achieving our intended goals. If we are serious about school improvement we can not overlook the need for such feedback.

Throughout this discussion I have focused on the processes and context for effective inservice teacher training and I have not attempted to address the content of these programs. This should not be taken to mean that the content is unimportant, rather it was intended to suggest where the greatest problems are now. By and large I believe that the specific content of inservice programs has been useful and appropriate. Unfortunately these programs have failed because they discounted or ignored the importance of the context or setting. If we could only become programatically more sensitive to these issues, I believe our success with inservice programs would increase dramatically.

I would like to conclude my remarks on effective inservice by indicating that the concepts and ideas suggested as part of the success based teacher training program discussed earlier have merit for inservice training as well. As a matter of fact, I believe that teachers

who are experiencing high levels of success in the work place may be the best individuals to provide a good bit of the inservice training needed to bring about urban school improvement. Their credibility and sensitivity would probably be unmatched by most others. One final comment-- I believe that principals who are evidencing success in the workplace are probably the best qualified individuals available to provide inservice to their administrative colleagues as well.

Summary

In this presentation I have attempted to contribute to the goals of this workshop series by presenting a number of issues and concerns relating to teacher training and urban school improvement. I will attempt to summarize my remarks in a series of belief statements.

1. I believe that we have the knowledge required to bring about urban school improvement.
2. I believe that effective teacher training should begin with a careful analysis of teacher successes and evolve through a process of backward planning.
3. I believe that effective preservice and inservice programs call for different orientations because they occur in different contexts.
4. I believe that teacher training should reflect a better balance of disciplinary perspectives expecially the inclusion of valuable sociological principles and concepts.
5. I believe that preservice training should include the placement of students with supervisory teachers who represent the best practitioners we can find.
6. I believe that inservice training should be organized around

the individual school and include significant numbers of individuals from the social system of that school.

7. I believe the principal is a key person in the success of any inservice program designed to promote school improvement.
8. I believe that higher education can play an important role in school improvement and inservice if they can do so on a collegial and collaborative basis.

I would like to close with a quote from David Tyach (The One Best System: The History of American Urban Education, 1974) who said "To create urban schools which really teach students, which reflect the pluralism of the society, which serve the quest of social justice--this is a task which will take persistence, imagination, wisdom and will."